IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application.

Please amend claims 1, 3-10 and 12-20, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor for use in a disk drive comprising:

a shaft supporting a thrust plate at one end thereof[[,]];

a sleeve surrounding the shaft[[,]] and being rotatable relative to the shaft and supporting a hub on the outer surface thereof, the sleeve having a surface adjacent the thrust plate, and the sleeve cooperating with the shaft to define a journal bearing and with the thrust plate to define a first fluid dynamic thrust bearing[[,]];

a counterplate welded to an upraised axial shoulder of the sleeve and having a surface located adjacent a surface of the thrust plate to define at least a second fluid dynamic thrust bearing[[,]];

fluid within the first and second thrust bearings and the journal bearing supporting relative rotation of the shaft and sleeve[[,]]; and

a groove region defined in the shoulder of the sleeve radially aligned with ~~adjacent~~ the counterplate to radially weaken the sleeve.

2. (Original) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 1 wherein the groove region extends at least part way axially into the radially inner portion of the sleeve shoulder.

3. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 2 wherein the groove region additionally extends into the radially outer surface of the counterplate.

4. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 2 wherein the grooved region extends to about half the ~~axially extent of the~~ counterplate thickness.

5. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 1 wherein the groove region is cut into the radially outer surface of the shoulder of the sleeve [[arm]] in a region ~~approximately parallel to or~~ near to [[the]] a gap between the counterplate and the ~~thrust plate~~ sleeve.

6. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 5 wherein the groove region is ~~as an axially extent~~ of a dimension which is approximately half the width ~~or axial width~~ of the counterplate.

7. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 1 wherein the groove region extends axially down the radially outer surface of the shoulder of the sleeve [[arm]].

8. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 7 wherein the groove region has an axial [[extent]] dimension equal to about half the axial depth of the counterplate.

9. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 1 wherein the groove region extends radially away from the counterplate into the sleeve, and extends from a point near to the junction between the radial and axial walls of the sleeve wall approximately part way toward the upper axial surface of the arm.

10. (Currently Amended) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 9 wherein the groove region is about half the axial width of the sleeve wall and about half the axial extent of the counterplate.

11. (Original) A spindle motor as claimed in claim 3 wherein the radially outer wall of the groove is tapered toward the radially outer wall of the shoulder.

12. (Currently Amended) A fluid dynamic bearing comprising a shaft supporting a thrust plate at one end thereof, a sleeve surrounding the shaft[[,]] and being rotatable relative to the shaft and supporting a hub on the outer surface thereof, the sleeve having a surface adjacent the thrust plate and cooperating with the shaft to define a journal bearing and with the thrust plate to define a first fluid dynamic thrust bearing, a counterplate welded to an upraised axial wall of the sleeve and having a surface located adjacent a surface of the thrust plate to define at least a second fluid dynamic thrust bearing, fluid within the first and second thrust bearings and the journal bearing supporting relative rotation of the shaft and sleeve, and a groove defined in [[the]] an arm of the sleeve ~~adjacent~~ aligned with the counterplate to radially weaken the sleeve.

13. (Currently Amended) A bearing as claimed in claim 12 wherein the ~~grooved region~~ groove extends at least part way axially into the radially inner portion of the sleeve arm.

14. (Currently Amended) A ~~spindle motor~~ bearing as claimed in claim 13 wherein the groove additionally extends along the radially outer surface of the counterplate.

15. (Currently Amended) A ~~spindle motor~~ bearing as claimed in claim 12 wherein the groove extends axially down the radially outer surface of the sleeve arm.

16. (Currently Amended) A ~~spindle motor~~ bearing as claimed in claim 15 wherein the groove has an axial extent equal to about half the axial depth of the counterplate.

17. (Currently Amended) A ~~spindle motor~~ bearing as claimed in claim 12 wherein the groove extends radially away from the counterplate into the sleeve, and extends from a point near to the junction between the radial and axial walls of the sleeve wall approximately part way toward the upper axial surface of the arm.

18. (Currently Amended) A ~~spindle motor~~ bearing as claimed in claim 17 wherein the groove is about half the axial width of the sleeve arm and about half the axial extent of the counterplate.

19. (Currently Amended) A ~~spindle motor~~ bearing as claimed in claim 2 wherein the radially outer wall of the groove is tapered toward the radially outer wall of the shoulder.

20. (Currently Amended) A fluid dynamic bearing comprising a shaft supporting a thrust plate at one end thereof, a sleeve surrounding the shaft, and rotatable relative to the shaft and supporting a hub on the outer surface thereof, the sleeve having a surface adjacent the thrust plate and cooperating with the shaft to define a journal bearing and with the thrust plate to define a first fluid dynamic thrust bearing, a counterplate welded to an upraised axial shoulder of the sleeve and having a surface located adjacent a surface of the thrust plate to define at least a second fluid dynamic thrust bearing, fluid within the first and second thrust bearings and the journal bearing supporting relative rotation of shaft and sleeve, and means defined in the upraised [[wall]] axial shoulder for weakening the radial stiffness of the wall.